

Business

Boursa Kuwait rings the bell for World Earth Day

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait rang the bell for World Earth Day, one of the most important environmental initiatives around the world, in collaboration with the UN Environment Programme's Regional Office for West Asia (UNEP) and the Environmental Voluntary Foundation (EVF).

Earth Day is an annual event on April 22 to demonstrate support for environmental protection. First held in 1970, it is now celebrated by more than 193 countries around the world. This year's theme is "Restore our Earth", a reminder that the preservation of our planet is not an option but has now become a necessity. Climate change and other environmental degradations have broken our natural systems, which may affect the global economy negatively.

Boursa Kuwait participated in this year's festivities to raise awareness to this cause as part of its Corporate Sustainability strategy, which aims creating long-term value for the company's stakeholders in the economic, social and environmental dimensions, while also contributing to the development of Kuwait and its economy as well as creating a meaningful impact on the community in which the bourse operates.

Over the past year, the company launched many initiatives across the three pillars of its strategy in partnership with local and international organizations. These programs and initiatives were focused on financial literacy and capital market awareness, the empowerment of women, support for nongovernmental organizations and volunteer work, safety and preventive measures against Covid-19 including the maintenance of business continuity in the best interests of issuers and investors, as well as environmental protection.

Boursa Kuwait is committed to minimizing its carbon footprint and continually improving environmental management practices to reduce the consumption of energy and other resources. The company undertook

several measures to reduce its use of electricity and water, including the implementation of energy-saving electrical products, advanced heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, and water-efficient plumbing devices, successfully reducing energy consumption by over one million kilowatts and water consumption by around 85 thousand gallons during 2020. Boursa Kuwait also actively promotes recycling across its operations and encourages employees to adopt environmentally responsible behaviors.

Naser M Al-Sanousi, Director of Marketing and Communication at Boursa Kuwait, commented on this occasion, saying, "On World Earth Day, Boursa Kuwait rings the bell for environmental awareness in collaboration with the United Nations Environmental Program and the Environmental Voluntary Foundation, reminding our society of the need to transform into a more sustainable economy that works for the people and this Earth."

As the country's sole exchange operator, Boursa Kuwait is keen to adopt and promote sustainable standards and practices, endorsing the efforts of market participants to enhance performance on environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) issues.

"ESG is now a key factor for investors when making decisions about their portfolios, as listed companies have a higher chance of reaching more investors by adopting sustainability practices in their operations. At Boursa Kuwait, we support listed companies by offering them an ESG guide and hosting representatives from the world's biggest index providers as well as helping them reach institutional investors from around the world," Al-Sanousi added.

Sami Dimassi, the Director and Regional Representative of the United Nations Environment Program in West Asia hailed Boursa Kuwait's involvement in the Earth Day festivities, saying, "Climate change and environmental degradations have broken our natural

systems, causing us to losing biodiversity at an alarming rate. The pandemic has given us a wakeup call to the state of our planet. Today, on Earth Day, we are reminded of what lays ahead and how we can protect and restore our Earth."

He added: "It is an opportunity for us to recognize that what we do, individually and collectively makes a difference on this planet. Let us focus on the opportunities that lay ahead, understand our natural environments and ecosystems, find solutions through innovation and forge a stronger partnership with our Earth."

Since September, Boursa Kuwait has collaborated with the Kuwait Dive Team - under the umbrella of the EVF and in cooperation with the UNEP - to protect and conserve the marine environment of Kuwait Bay. The Kuwait Dive Team conducted 16 operations using the Boursa Boat, removing around 63 tons of waste through the end of 2020. These trips included a two-ton clearing of hazardous waste from beaches and islands in collaboration with government institutions, eight trips to clear 4.8 tons of fishing nets, and six operations to remove wrecked ships and boats with the combined weight of 56 tons.

Showing its commitment to the preservation of the Kuwait Bay and its surroundings, Boursa Kuwait reinforced its partnership with the EVF and the Kuwait Dive Team in association with the UNEP, sponsoring the National Campaign to Remove Hazardous Waste from the Kuwait Bay and its Beaches and supporting the Dive Team's efforts for the preservation of Kuwait's



Nasser Al-Sanousi



Sami Dimassi



Waleed Al-Fadhel

marine environment.

Commenting on the ongoing partnership between the bourse and the EVF, Al-Sanousi said, "I am pleased to announce Boursa Kuwait's sponsorship of the National Campaign to Remove Hazardous Waste from the Kuwait Bay and its Beaches, helping raise awareness of the preservation of these beaches in the community as well as encouraging its members to participate in volunteer work."

President of the Kuwait Dive Team Waleed Fadhel Al-Fadhel also spoke about the partnership with Boursa Kuwait, saying, "The Kuwait Bay is the second most important bay in the world after the Gulf of Mexico. With the support of our strategic partners Boursa Kuwait and the UNEP, the Dive Team will continue to preserve the marine environment of the Kuwait Bay, with its importance economically, environmentally and scientifically as a center for the reproduction of fish and other marine creatures. On World Earth Day, we ask that everyone be environmentally vigilant, protecting the marine environment in general and the Kuwait Bay in particular."

Markaz wins Kuwait's 'Best Investment Bank' for 2021

KUWAIT: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" was recently named the 'Best Investment Bank in Kuwait' for 2021 by Global Finance Magazine, the New York-based financial publication for the tenth time in 11 years. The award follows the results of the annual survey, which are scheduled to be published in the magazine's April issue.

Markaz topped the list of the most distinguished investment banks in Kuwait, based on international standards. The criteria for selection included quality of service, volume of transactions, market share, pricing, and innovative transactions.

Ali H Khalil, Chief Executive Officer, expressed Markaz's pride in winning the award, which is a tribute

NBK Economic Update

Kuwait project awards gather pace in 1Q 21

KUWAIT: Project awards came in higher in 1Q21 compared to a year earlier but still lower than originally anticipated. The value of projects awarded in 1Q21 reached KD 257 million, up 99 percent from the previous quarter, according to MEED projects. This is still far short of the KD 1.4 billion that was expected in 1Q21.

The ongoing mobility restrictions in place to limit the spread of the coronavirus and the uncertain economic climate have likely hindered progress in project tendering and execution. The majority of projects awarded (by value) in the first quarter were in the construction and transport sectors (see below). While there are many projects slated for the rest of 2021 (about KD 4 billion), based on past trends and given the still pandemic-related movement restrictions, awards could fall way short of expectations.

Projects awards by sector transport

Awards in the transport sector increased in 1Q 21 compared to the previous quarter. The transport sector witnessed about KD 84 million in project awards, though this stemmed mainly from the MPW's Damascus Street, 5th Ring Road & King Faisal Bin Abdul Aziz Road works projects, valued at about KD 78 million. Transport sector projects are a pressing concern, as maintenance and upkeep of the country's transport infrastructure becomes increasingly overdue. Looking ahead, awards activity in the sector is expected to gather pace with about KD 1 billion worth of

6 KFH customers win 12 kg of gold in Al-Rabeh draw

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has announced Huda Al-Sabah, Shadi Jaber and Salem Al-Mutawa as winners of 3 kg of gold each in the Al-Rabeh account quarterly draw. The bank also announced the winners of 1 kg of gold in the monthly draw of Al-Rabeh account. The winners of 1 kg of gold each are Muhammad Nazish, Qais AbdulRedha and Muhammad Al-Janahi and that is for the month of March.

KFH is offering a total of 77 kg of gold prizes for 45 winners during the one-year campaign, through the new Al-Rabeh account campaign entitled "Your winning chance is bigger with Al-rabeh account". KFH conducts monthly, quarterly and annual draws under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The prizes are targeted for all KFH and non KFH customers with their salaries not being less than 500 KD.

to its leading position in the market and the excellence of its products and services. Since inception, Markaz has won more than 50 investment banking and asset management awards from several esteemed international institutions.

Khalil stated: "Markaz won the "Best Investment Bank in Kuwait" award for the tenth time in 11 years, which reflects the exceptional quality of our investment banking team; especially in the areas of advisory and capital markets. It is the result of our strong commitment to provide our clients with the best quality service and to deliver on what we promise under all circumstances. This has earned us the trust of our clients and the notable appreciation we get from our local and international partners."

Despite the challenges faced by regional markets during previous years, Markaz has earned the reputation of being one of the most reliable investment institutions due to its consistent performance throughout the years. This reflects the strength of the company's research-driven culture in decision-making. Markaz

projects in the pipeline for 2Q and 3Q 21. Notable upcoming projects include infrastructure works on PAHW's Sabah Al Ahmed Township (KD 300 million) and MPW's crossroads for the new passenger terminal, due to be awarded in 2Q 21 and 3Q 21 respectively.

Construction

The construction sector came in first in terms of project awards in the first quarter of 2021. The sector witnessed about KD 92 million in project awards - and this was mainly from PAHW's Sabah Al Ahmed township (residential complex). Government-sponsored projects have been rationalized amid the coronavirus pandemic and intensifying fiscal pressures. That said, however, nearly 40 percent of planned projects for 2021 are in the construction sector, including Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP) and Kuwait Municipality - South Al-Jahra Labour City (KD 149 million) and MPW's Mubarak Al-Kabeer Seaport Project (KD 271 million), along with various smaller scale projects.

Power and water

Momentum eased in the power and water sectors this quarter, after awards exceeded KD 100 million in the previous quarter. This sector saw moderate activity in 1Q 21 with KD 41 million in project awards, stemming from several Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) projects, including the substation at Al-Sabah hospital. Additionally, with the development of various energy-intensive projects as part of Kuwait's development plan, the demand for utilities is projected to grow significantly. Looking ahead, MEED figures show about KD 660 million in the project pipeline for the rest of the year, most of which is due to be awarded in the second quarter. However, given recent trends, we expect to see some projects rolled over into subsequent quarters. Notable upcoming projects include the MEW - Wastewater Treatment Plant in South Al-Mutlaa Area (KD 173 million), which is now scheduled for 3Q 21 (previously 1Q 21).

When their salaries are transferred to Al-Rabeh account, they will be able to win unprecedented prizes by participating in the draws, that are: a monthly draw in winning 1 KG of gold for three winners, and a quarterly draw with 3 winners per draw with 3 KG of gold per winner.

At the end of the campaign, an annual draw is made to announce the grand prize winner of 12 kg of gold for the first place winner, 3 kg of gold for the second place winner and 2 kg of gold for the third place winner. The total number of winners is 45 customers, and the total prizes at the end of the campaign is 77 kg of gold.

Al-Rabeh account is opened in KD for individuals, providing that salary transfer is required as a prerequisite for customers to enter the draw. With regards to the terms and conditions of the prizes and draws, a customer should deposit 3 salaries during the 3 months prior to the draw, and the minimum balance of the account should not be less than KD 50 at the end of each month during the 3 months prior to the draw.

Every additional KD 50 in the account increases the customer's chances to win, thus, Al-Rabeh account, with these benefits and rewards is suitable for customers wishing to transfer their salaries and manage their personal accounts, with the possibility of saving and investing. Al-

offers full-fledged services in asset management, investment banking and real estate.

Markaz Asset Management includes regional equity and fixed income mutual funds, and portfolio management. Its real estate activities include managing real-estate funds, direct real estate investments, and real estate development covering the GCC, Europe and the USA. Also, its Wealth Management team offers global asset allocation investments for family offices and institutional clients. Markaz Investment Banking solutions encompass issuance of debt and equity, advising corporate clients on dispositions and acquisitions, and debt and capital restructuring.



Ali Khalil

Oil, gas and chemicals

The oil and gas sector finally saw some awards in 1Q21, after a year in which there was negligible activity. The sector saw about KD 41 million from a single project award: Kuwait Oil Company's (KOC's) Jurassic Production Facilities 4 & 5 (Off-plot works) project. Project awards effectively stalled in 2020 on concerns about the oil sector's future prospects following the precipitous, pandemic-linked decline in oil prices. Kuwait's oil and gas sector has about KD 635 million in awards planned for 2Q and 3Q21 including KOC's JPF 4 & 5 Production Facilities, valued at around KD 270 million and several smaller scale oil pipeline projects (KD 280 million). That said, based on a recent report by MEED, the Jurassic Production Facilities (4 & 5) project is facing further delays as the tender has yet to be finalized.

Kuwait's chemical sector has seen negligible activity in recent years. However, with the upcoming Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIIC) - Al Zour Petrochemical Complex project (KD 2.85 billion), the sector is poised to see some highly anticipated movement in early 2022. Further delays cannot be ruled out, though.

The Projects outlook for 2021

MEED Projects estimates that some KD 3.9 billion worth of projects are planned for the remainder of 2021, including many that have been rolled over to 2Q21 from 1Q 21. However, given the ongoing pattern of delays and setbacks and the high probability that the current partial curfew will be extended through to mid-May, it is very likely that a much smaller figure will materialize.

A large portion (40 percent) of planned 2021 project awards stems from the construction sector, with phase 1 of MPW's Mubarak Al-Kabeer Seaport Project (KD 271 million) and several other parts of the Public Authority for Housing and Welfare (PAHW's) Sabah Al Ahmed Township project due to be awarded this year.



Rabeh account confirms KFH's continued keenness to deliver premium products that meet customers' aspirations and enhance the bank's leadership in the market.

AUB congratulates winners of Al-Hassad weekly draw

KUWAIT: In accordance with full preventive guidelines and measures set by health authorities, Ahli United Bank (AUB) held the weekly draw on April 21, 2021 of Al-Hassad Islamic account which is the very first account draw in Islamic banking in Kuwait and has won the "Best Savings Product in Kuwait 2019" by the prestigious Banker Middle East Magazine for the numerous unique features it provides. Al-Hassad Islamic account offers over 750 prizes, Over 12 Month Period and has reshaped the lives of thousands lucky winners.

The bank and announced 20 winners of KD 1,000 as follows: Ghanim Saqer Al-Shaheen, Kareemah Khudhair Karm, Rashid Ali Al-Elaiwa, Hasan Mahmoud Hasan, Souad Kassem Kassem, Abdulrahman Faisal Al-Kandari, Salah Ahmad Al-Kandari, Marek Wlodzimierz Narkiewicz, Sanad Hemaidi Al-Sanad, Najat Mohammad Haji, Nadia Anas Abdulaheem, Eman Darweesh Hasan, Laila Abdullah Al-Haddad, Ahmed Mohamad Abdmohaymen, Sarah Saeed Ghadhbani, Ibrahim Adeb Khalifeh, Taisir Obaid Al-Shikh, Awatef Hamad Al-Subeeh, Aiydah Jamaan Al-Azmi, And Bader Saleh Al-Enezi.

The draws of Al-Hassad include several cash prizes, such as KD 100,000 each Eid and the grand quarterly draw of KD 250,000 prize which continues to be a key aspiration for customers who are wishing to fulfill their dreams. Al Hassad offers 20 weekly prizes of KD 1,000 for each winner. In addition to this attractive package of rewards, Al-Hassad Islamic account incorporates a Wakala contract for projected annual profits, making this account beneficial to all customer segments that are aspiring to build their short and long-term savings through a unique savings account with many advantages.

Furthermore, for the first time in Kuwait, the AUB Al-Hassad presents the "Privilege Draw", which is a quarterly draw of KD 25,000 exclusively for Al-Hassad customers who maintained their balances for more than one year and have not won a prize in the past five years. For all draws, the clients are eligible for one draw chance for each KD 50 deposited in their Al-Hassad account.

It is worth mentioning that Al-Hassad Islamic account has won the "Best Savings Product in Kuwait 2019" by the prestigious Banker Middle East Magazine for the numerous unique features it provides. Such features include the simplest and easiest program, highest number of winners, largest prize value, unique draws during Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha, loyalty multipliers, unique online account opening feature, transparent draws held during radio shows with live broadcast on the Bank's social media platforms.